

## **Minutes – June 10, 2020 PAAC meeting**

**Meeting -- Date, Time, Location:** PEG Access Advisory Committee (PAAC) Meeting, Wednesday, June 10, 2020, 10:00 a.m., via Zoom public meeting. The meeting is recorded, and is available on Minuteman Media Network [here](#).

**Present:** Scott Hopkinson (chair), Ruth Lauer, Peggy Wargelin (Clerk), Wally Johnston (School Rep.), Jane Hotchkiss (Select Board Liaison) with no video, Karlen Reed, Philip Lupsiewicz (MMN Station Manager), Erin Stevens (PICM) with no video, Kate Hodges (Deputy Town Manager) with no video. Jeremy Romanul (Town Manager's office/Zoom administrator) with no video. **Absent:** Vince Carlson, Gene Chang, and Tim Goddard (Carlisle ex-officio).

**1. Call to Order** – Hopkinson called the meeting to order at 10a.m. on Zoom platform in accordance with the Town's Policy Directives and Guidelines issued 4/1/2020, and amended May 7, 2020.

Since Eugene Chang has resigned, and Peggy Wargelin's term is ending after town meeting, there are two openings on the PAAC. After some discussion of procedure, it was decided that Romanul will send a list of people, who have expressed interest in the PAAC on green cards they have submitted to the town, to Hopkinson and the Select Board. Also, Wally Johnston will no longer be the School Committee representative after town meeting, but the School Committee will appoint a new member.

Frank Breen, a former PAAC member, has asked to be considered for another term.

**2. Meetings and Minutes** – A meeting will be planned for late August or early September. This date will be decided via email. PAAC meetings will be planned to be via Zoom until they can safely be in person.

(David Allen joined the meeting.)

The minutes for Jan. 29, 2020 were approved unanimously. Reed will send the final version to the Town Clerk for posting.

**3. Proposed Essential Broadband discussion** – Reed presented a proposal from Carlson for future discussion about expanding the Comcast Broadband Essential service for low income and senior customers. About half of MMN's viewers watch MMN programming via internet connection. There is no comparable low-income program for Concord Broadband customers, and their lowest tier costs about \$50. A short term program is underway on a limited basis during the pandemic for seniors through the Council on Aging and the Concord Housing Authority. No idea if the Town is interested in extending this beyond the current reach, but next steps might be for PAAC to look at the information and talk about it at the next meeting to see if we could work on this as a joint project.

After some discussion, the PAAC wants to make sure people who are not on Comcast and cannot afford Concord Broadband can access MMN programming, but not necessarily specify the means. We can research and highlight the need, if any, and help in the search for the best means for that to happen. While the PEG Access funds from Comcast might be a possible source for such a program, and the PAAC might make a recommendation based on their research, any decision about funding would be made by the Town Manager. Hopkinson will ask to be on the Select Board agenda to discuss this issue as well as help clarify the role of the PAAC in our general support of the Minuteman Media Network. The Chair will also talk about this issue with the head of Concord Broadband.

**4. MMN Update and Budget status** – The pandemic has drastically limited MMN activities. Stevens explained they are currently working on the Carlisle Town Meeting, which is being held live at the school basketball complex, and will be live-streamed on Minuteman.media. Their main activity has been helping edit and post

Zoom recordings of committee meetings, as well as live broadcasting of the Select Board, School Committee, and FinCom meetings.

They put out a call to businesses and general community members to submit non-commercial videos, and had some useful responses which have been broadcast. Since MMN was deemed non-essential, not much else.

The MMN studio re-opening plans will depend on when the Town Manager decides on phased opening of the town as a whole. Probably there will only be one employee there when it does, for 25% capacity. The capital budget has not changed from the one presented by Hodges several months ago. The hiring of an education coordinator has been put on hold for now, and is tied to producing content at the school, but since we don't know what the school year will look like it was decided to wait until we get to Phase 4 of reopening (the "new normal"). This position is designed to focus on working with middle school and high school students and teachers to generate content. There was a suggestion that students and teachers might find some technical help useful during the online requirements of the pandemic, so perhaps an earlier hiring schedule might be worth consideration.

Stevens presented a list of questions to the PAAC requesting the creation of official policies on how to prioritize MMN resources and where/when to broadcast programming, how to triage importance of questions? What triggers staff filming vs. a volunteer?

Some suggested answers:

- Prioritize the training programs for adults so there will be more people who can record events.
- When deciding what station on which to broadcast a program, balance between Public and Educational channels to show the need for both channels when negotiating with Comcast.
- Staff availability and how allocate: perhaps wait until there is a complaint, forward it to the PAAC and we will address each individually.

Stevens asked for concrete thoughts and recommendations from the whole PAAC on each question because there have been comments and questions from the public on each. They would like the PAAC to do research and create draft policies for the town to work from and use as guidance. They would also like all our ideas about marketing.

Wargelin volunteered to create a draft response for the committee to discuss at the next meeting, and Reed volunteered to help her. The Chair had a few suggestions for sites which allow less-technical people to be able to create content. He will forward to Stevens. Also, perhaps MMN can coordinate with the school for publicly available, student-generated content, which has already been distributed in school newsletters. MMN always gets a signed form from the creator of any content, and for school content they check with the School Superintendent. MMN staff should also look out for possible accidental advertisements, e.g., business signs, and other possible problematic content.

**5. FCC Update** – Reed presented for Carlson on this item. Two highlights:

-The FCC order which deregulated cable in 32 towns in western MA (the 2019 Charter Order); Can this happen here? What would be the impact? Perhaps the PAAC should consult with state officials at the state Dept. of Telecom and Cable on the implementation of cable regulations coming in the future. Perhaps put this item on the PAAC agenda sometime next year.

- Also, the PAAC should keep track on how integrating complex broadband tech will impact cable TV and PEG Access in a future meeting, to be able to provide useful advice.

- Inviting the new Concord Broadband head to a future PAAC meeting to discuss how they plan to integrate new technology would also be useful.

## **6. Public / attendee Comments –**

David Allen – Is there the capability for some back and forth discussion during Public Comment portions of live Zoom meetings of Select Board, FinCom, and School Committee?

The Zoom platform does allow for this. Hotchkiss explained the School Committee does allow public comment during the public comment portion at the beginning of the meeting, but so far no one has taken advantage. The Select Board does allow comments at the very end of the meeting, but there has not been high attendance.

Brooks Reid – At the Feb 24<sup>th</sup> town meeting he presented on Article 45, an article to request that executive sessions of the Select Board be recorded so that they can be kept confidential until they were released when the minutes are finally released. Karlen Reed suggested that he should discuss this article with the PAAC to see if there were issues for MMN recording and maintaining confidentiality if this article passes. The Chair apologized for missing Brooks' email. The PAAC will consider how this might be implemented if the article passes.

Chair made Motion to Adjourn, Wargelin seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Hopkinson adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Submitted by Peggy Wargelin, former clerk.

Approved on Wednesday, September 30, 2020